

NSC BRIEFING

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15 June 1955

KWANGTUNG FAMINE ✓

- I. Winter and spring drought in South China's Kwangtung Province (pop. 35 million) is reported by ChiCom's themselves, to be worst in over 90 years. ChiCom's organizing "spring and summer famine" relief.
- A. [redacted] 8-10,000 Kwangtung residents trying to enter British Colony.
- B. Consulate reports "thousands" attempting cross border into Portuguese Macao.
- II. Despite bad conditions, ChiComs are shipping rice out of South China.
- A. Yangtze Valley--China's traditional "rice bowl"--suffered badly from summer '54 floods.
- B. This year ChiComs have been getting rice for export to Ceylon from South China, rather than Yangtze Valley. (300,000 tons planned for '55, about half already shipped).
- C. Peiping even complaining that improperly large amount of state food stock in Kwangtung being issued to local population, instead of being reserved.
- III. Situation in Kwangtung will not improve before this year's first rice harvest (late summer): even then, government crop collections are likely to result in continuing "austerity," rationing.

STATE review(s) completed.

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- A. However, Communist control of area remains firm and Peiping does not seem fearful of possible peasant dissidence.
- B. Except for bad impression it might make on Overseas Chinese (many of whom are Kwangtung emigrants), Peiping probably would not object to substantial loss of life among these stubborn, energetic and far-from-converted southerners.

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